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## **BINMIC Action Committee**

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June 5, 2009

Mr. Ron Paananen  
Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Program Administrator  
Washington State Department of Transportation  
999 Third Avenue, Suite 2424  
Seattle, WA 98104

Re: North Portal Concept Comments

Mr. Paananen:

The BINMIC Action Committee and its member organizations have identified a number of issues regarding the North Portal for the Bored Tunnel which are provided in the bullets below.

- The design of this key freight arterial must be consistent with recognized highway and freight arterial standards for new construction. 'Major Truck Streets' must be established and clearly identified in the engineering design drawings. These routes need to be designated and vetted during the design review process. The routes should be designed with the specific goal of facilitating east-west truck movements from Ballard/Interbay, Fremont areas, and other parts of Northwest Seattle to North Portal access and Highway 99 access points. It is imperative that these routes be protected through elimination or reduction of on street parking, traffic lights, 'sharrows', curb bulbs and other impediments to smooth-flowing freight movement along the corridors.
- Concepts A, B and C as currently configured do not provide adequate egress and exit from Highway 99. The configuration of too many turns will make it difficult for trucks to maneuver. As currently configured, each of the proposed concepts will increase traffic congestion and pollution, with the result being decreased truck and other vehicle mobility. We are concerned about the effect on transportation times of these currently proposed requirements that trucks make multiple sharp right-hand turns in rapid succession to access the tunnel. A detailed project traffic analysis, not a programmatic evaluation, must be included as part of the supplemental EIS. The analysis should address both in-city freight mobility, as well as the effect of different tunnel/portal designs on the larger region: from Shoreline to Burien. The traffic analysis should include an analysis of the waterfront boulevard and plans to accommodate the new traffic that will use the waterfront when the tunnel replaces the viaduct.
- In keeping with the nature of the corridor as an essential freight corridor, surface streets near the tunnel must be designated as part of Highway 99 to accommodate the needs of businesses in the North Portal vicinity for unimpeded ingress and egress to their buildings and operations, especially given the large number of special events that occur at the Seattle Center.
- Direct access to and from Mercer Street or Denny Way to the tunnel is missing from the current designs. Direct on and off-ramp access must be provided from these streets.
- The tolling location for the North Portal should be discussed and designed now, since it will impact traffic flow. The tolling location should be addressed in the traffic analysis.

- Given the essential nature of the current structure to the economic vitality of the region, a plan to address the viability of the current viaduct for the entirety of the construction process must be part of the overall planning and design work for the tunnel. Any remediation deemed necessary to keep the viaduct a safe and viable roadway for the entirety of the construction process must include provisions for tunnel construction timelines that may exceed current projections. The viaduct must remain at current service levels throughout the process.
- Staging areas for construction need to be resolved as soon as possible.

Given the planning, design construction and traffic analysis issues we have identified, the BINMIC AC and its member organizations believe it is unrealistic that the current plan for completion of the North Portal design be completed by the end of 2009.

We also believe that the makeup of the stakeholder group advising the project team on North Portal design should be expanded to include stakeholders with specific expertise in the areas expressed herein. We thank you for the opportunity to make these comments, and we are happy to make recommendations on how best to accommodate the needs of all stakeholders.

Regards,



John Kane, Chair - BINMIC Action Committee



Beth Williamson Miller, Executive Director - Ballard Chamber of Commerce



Eugene Wasserman, President - North Seattle Industrial Association



Peter Philips, President - Seattle Marine Business Coalition

cc: Mayor Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor of Seattle  
 Councilmember Richard Conlin  
 Councilmember Sally Clark  
 Councilmember Tim Burgess  
 Councilmember Bruce Harrell  
 Councilmember Tom Rasmussen  
 Robert Powers, SDOT  
 Mary Lou Dickerson, State Rep, 36<sup>th</sup> District  
 Reuven Carlyle, State Rep, 36<sup>th</sup> District  
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